

Headteacher's Blog – Week Beginning 29 September

What a lively week it's been at Woodlands - full of learning, pupil voice, and community moments that remind me why our school is such a special place. From specialist support to clubs, and from reading adventures to curriculum development, there's plenty to celebrate.

Enrichment and extra-curricular buzz

We started Monday with KS2 Archery at Breakfast Club, a brilliant, calm and focused launch to the day. Midweek, Year 3 kept up their Judo PE sessions, and after school the fields and KS2 hall were busy with Y3/4 Table Tennis, Y5/6 Tag Rugby, Y3/4 Football, and Guitar Lessons! Our academic clubs kept brains whirring too - reading, writing, phonics, times tables, and English/maths opportunities ran throughout the week, with our Year 6 'early-bird' groups showing impressive commitment before the bell. Our kitchens helped us make the week even more fabulous with a "K-Pop Hunters" (I have never heard of them) special menu, which certainly added to the smiles at lunchtime on Thursday, and we trialled some music at lunch which also made it really fun! We are looking to review our lunches, snacks etc and will be approaching you all in the near future for some feedback on this as we adapt our practice to reflect local and school changes. Swimming continued for Group A on today, a pillar of confidence-building, wider development and independence in the curriculum.

Inclusion, wellbeing, and specialist support

A wide range of professionals have joined us this week to offer advice and discuss plans. I met with Miss Roberts and a colleague from the North West Maths Hub on Monday afternoon, to discuss some exciting work we will be doing with them. We absolutely love our Speech and Language Therapists (SALT) and they have worked with pupils across Hedgehogs, Foxes and our Resource Provision classes; our Mental Health Support Team checked in; and colleagues attended SEND network sessions and SEN advisor drop-ins to keep up to date on developments, ensure our future plans are robust and up-to-date and network with other key staff from across the LA. Staff also undertook detailed SEND paperwork and inclusion-plan reviews - the quiet, meticulous work that makes a big difference for individual children. We worked out that for one person to conduct all of our annual reviews for SEND, it would take 4 weeks... imagine how lucky I feel that we have a team of staff all working on this one aspect of daily life! We are blessed to have such fabulous support from the local Safeguarding Children in Education team, they have not only provided us with some pretty specialist advice this week about issues affecting some of our families, but also offer our staff, dealing with the most challenging situations, formal supervision for their wellbeing and to ensure we leave no stone unturned when it comes to safeguarding our children. We also submitted the annual audit to them this week, and I am always so proud and reassured when we capture the work we do on this key document.

It is that time of year when we start to prepare for student teachers (as they have all recovered from Fresher's Week at uni!) and are ready to start their professional journey as teachers, to that end we welcomed a student teacher from Wrexham into 2DR at the start of the week. I have said it before, but it's always energising to support the next generation of teachers and to see children benefit from fresh ideas and extra pairs of hands.

Pupil voice and community

Across school, the vast majority of our classes (except our babies and RPs) completed the Hands Up survey on Monday - an important snapshot of how children travel to school and how we can keep journeys safe and sustainable. We hosted a Prospective EYFS tour (always a joy to share our early-years magic), and I have joined colleagues for a range of leadership meetings, including SLT, RP planning, Cyber Security and our Governors' meeting on Tuesday evening. We have a parent governor vacancy currently advertised ... and we are also blessed to be welcoming a new Co-opted governor in the very near future, who will hopefully be overseeing SEN.

Key dates and notices

Parents' Evening bookings opened Thursday at 7:30pm – if you haven't seen this, or actioned it, please do jump on and secure your slot if you haven't already.

Curriculum and professional growth

Across the week, colleagues engaged with Ofsted/DFE-linked webinars, EYFS supervision, PEP reviews, and multiple professional collaborations. This steady, reflective professional learning for staff underpins the day-to-day sparkle you see in classrooms - and it's one of the reasons our provision keeps moving forward. Mrs Liversey has been working on updating the curriculum information – watch this space for more about that, it will go live on our website and I was delighted with the format when I looked at it this morning, so I hope you will be, too!

Closing thoughts

As we round off our first full month of the school year, I'm proud of the balance our community achieves: joyful enrichment, tailored support for individual pupils, and multiple layers of ongoing professional learning - each strand pulled together and inter-woven with care. I am thankful that our team, governors, mid-days, teaching assistants, admin team, teachers and senior leaders, have been so proactive, especially in this last month, as we have embedded 2 new provisions in school. They have reviewed key documents I have prepared, The School Development Plan and the Self Evaluation Framework to name two, which reflect where we are as a school and where we will focus our efforts in the coming year. They were completely revamped this year to reflect the new Ofsted Toolkit and ensure that if we are inspected, we have the information required at our fingertips. They have been incredibly supportive of me personally as I navigated the tricky world of being the parent of a child with cancer and have proven again that their compassion, kindness and care knows no limits. It is this kind of care that also underpins the way our staff work with our children and our families and it is a wonder to experience.

Warm regards,
Dr Victoria Carr
Headteacher